

ABSTRACT

WEIGHT LOSS AND HERBAL SUPPLEMENT USE IN COLLEGE STUDENTS

Obesity is a major problem in America today, contributing to a number of serious health conditions. One method some people use to lose weight is ingestion of herbal supplements. Use of herbal supplements carries risks of cardiovascular and endocrine problems as well as potential contraindications with prescription medications and other over-the-counter products. A convenience sample of 168 college students in general education Health Sciences classes was surveyed to assess correlations between use of herbal supplements and selected demographic information and methods used for weight loss. Pearson chi-square analysis with Yates correction factor indicated significant associations between herbal supplement use and ethnicity, normal BMI, past and current use of "other" over-the-counter supplements, adverse reactions to herbal supplements, and knowledge of others using herbal supplements for weight loss. This study, although small, adds to the scant amount of literature on college students' use of herbal supplements for weight loss.

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